

The Library preserves the record of our past and present, and makes it available to everyone who wants to do research. But the heavier the use of our collections, the more important our conservation work becomes so that material remains in usable condition for researchers in the centuries to come. Some information is recorded on carriers that degrade even if they are not used, such as sound recordings made on acetate discs. Our Centre for Conservation signals the

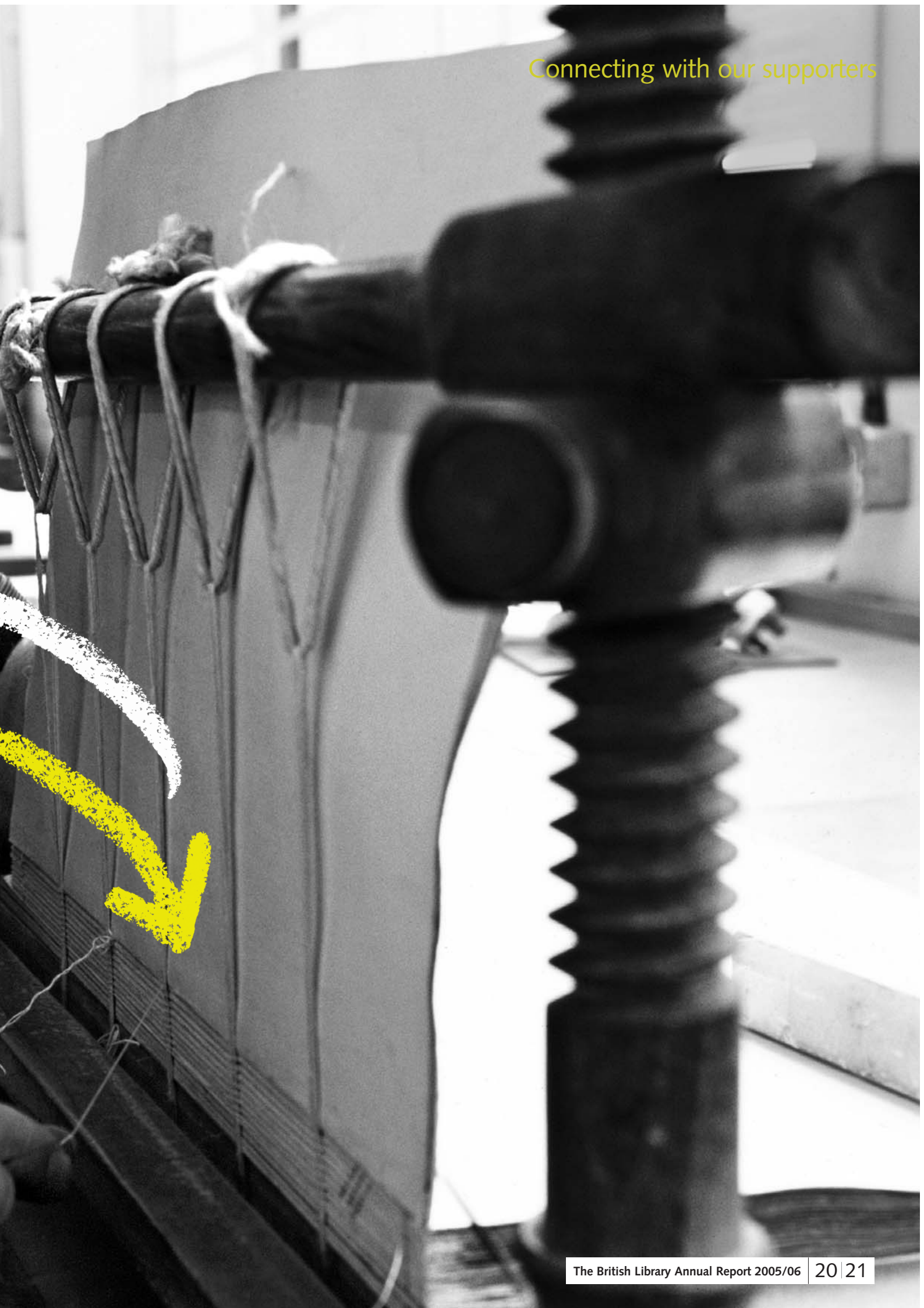
importance that the Library attaches to this aspect of our work. The fact that money for its construction was raised from trusts and individuals demonstrates how widely our commitment is shared.

The Centre will bring together all our different book conservation teams for the first time in the history of the Library. It will also house the Sound Archive's technical operations and professional remastering facilities.

We will be giving tours of the studios, demonstrations and lectures so that people can engage with experts in their working environment. A training programme for conservation professionals is being planned in partnership with a higher education provider.

# Connecting the past to the future through conservation

The British Library Centre for Conservation has been built during the year. The Centre will enable the Library to bring together the world-class skills of our conservation teams and help to educate the conservators of the future.



# Connecting with our supporters

We connect with our supporters through a shared desire to widen access to the world's knowledge.

More than ever before this is being achieved thanks to record levels of support from individuals, trusts, foundations and corporations this year. For example, our world-class Centre for Conservation is near completion and the oldest New Testament is to be conserved and digitally reunified to allow worldwide access via the web.



*"My Ladye Nevells Booke is delightful not only because of the music it contains, but also for its decoration, calligraphy and binding. The book quickly caught the imagination of funders and the public. The acquisition was very rewarding for me personally because I'm a keen pianist and in my excitement I bought a modern edition to play in preparation for the fundraising work! I feel privileged to be able to make that connection between my work and my own passion."*

**Michele Burton**  
Trust Fundraising Manager

## Conservation research

One of the largest grants ever made for conservation research in the UK has been awarded to the British Library. The grant of \$695,000 from the Andrew W Mellon Foundation will help us safeguard the future of the nation's collections by enabling us to research the impact of environmental conditions on books.

The research will be led by Dr Barry Knight, the UK's first Head of Conservation Research, and we will collaborate with the other five Legal Deposit libraries, the National Archives and the National Archives of Scotland.

One project will examine copies of the same books held by various libraries and compare how differences in their storage conditions and usage have affected their state of preservation. An element of the work will analyse volatile organic compounds, which all paper emits as it ages (hence the smell of old books) and which, being acidic, contribute to degradation. By sampling the air in their storage facilities the partners will get early warnings of when the acid content is reaching dangerous levels. This will help them to improve the design of stores to minimise degradation.

## My Ladye Nevells Booke

William Byrd was 16th century England's most celebrated composer, and a manuscript containing 42 of his works has been acquired for the nation. Completed in 1591, the manuscript contains alterations and additions believed to be by Byrd himself. Musicians and scholars acknowledge it as one of the finest Tudor music manuscripts in existence.

The acquisition was made possible through the generous support of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, National Art Collections Fund, Friends of the British Library, Friends of the National Libraries, the Golsoncott Foundation and members of the public.



**My Ladye Nevells Booke»**  
Dedicated to Elizabeth, wife of Sir Henry Nevill (sic) of Billingbere, Berkshire

**Construction of the new Centre for Conservation is on target and on budget**

**British Library Centre for Conservation**

Construction of the new Centre for Conservation is progressing on target and on budget, and a Topping Out Ceremony has now been held to mark completion of the outer shell. New donations have included major awards from the Garfield Weston Foundation, Paccar Foundation, Fidelity UK Foundation and American Trust for the British Library.

When the building opens in spring 2007, dedicated facilities will enable us to offer a range of new training opportunities for book conservation and sound archiving. We want to offer bursaries to young people undertaking internships, and the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Ernest Cook Trust have kindly agreed to contribute towards these.



**International Dunhuang Project**

The Ford Foundation has awarded a substantial grant to the International Dunhuang Project (IDP) to enhance significantly our connections with partners in China, India and Russia. As well as enabling 10,000 items from their collections to be catalogued, digitised and added to IDP's online database, the grant will also help us develop the research skills and networks of scholars in these regions, and will pump-prime the foundation of an IDP Centre in India. Further funding is now being sought to conserve, catalogue and digitise the remainder of our Silk Road collections and to introduce new resources for schools and colleges.



IDP resources are used in schools» Chinese schoolchildren learn about their heritage

**Codex Sinaiticus Project**

A number of major grants have been made this year to support the *Codex Sinaiticus* Project, an international collaboration to conserve and digitise the world's oldest Bible. These included awards from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, AG Leventis Foundation, the American Friends of Saint Catherine's Monastery and an anonymous trust. The awards enabled us to more than match the Stavros S Niarchos Foundation's £150,000 challenge grant. A Royal Gala Dinner is being held in June 2006, in partnership with the Saint Catherine Foundation, to complete the appeal.



The oldest complete New Testament» Written in Greek by three scribes in the 4th century



**CONNECTING WITH FUTURE GENERATIONS OF CONSERVATORS**



**A TIME CAPSULE CONTAINING TOOLS, SOUND RECORDINGS AND PHOTOS OF STAFF WILL BE BUILT INTO THE FABRIC OF THE CENTRE FOR CONSERVATION.**